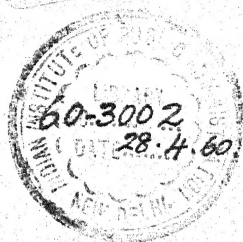


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PREFACE

The Indian Institute of Public Administration invited me about two years ago to give a series of three lectures on district administration in India. The text of these lectures, given in this small book, may serve as a short introduction to the study of district administration. The administration of the district, as part of our administrative system in India, has a role of somewhat special importance and significance in the welfare and progress of our people. It is a subject, therefore, that merits study and attention in greater detail than perhaps it has obtained in the past, with particular reference to the basic principles which I have attempted to list during the course of these lectures. I believe that these principles hold good, and will continue to hold good, in the context of our mode of administration and government through a parliamentary democracy sustained by the Constitution and the rule of law. I believe also that the principles of sound administration demand, as they have always demanded in the past, careful and constant upholding by the agencies of government as well as the people for whose service administration exists.

I should perhaps mention that the views expressed in these lectures are all my own and in no way to be taken as committing or involving anyone else, including the government.

I am grateful to the I.I.P.A. and its Director, Prof. V.K.N. Menon, for inviting me to give these lectures.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Shri V.T. Krishnamachari, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, and doyen of Indian administrators, for presiding at all three of the lectures. He has also been good enough to write a Foreword to this book.

New Delhi
1-2-1960

S.S. KHERA

FOREWORD

The Indian Institute of Public Administration is grateful to Shri Khera for agreeing to the publication of the three lectures on "District Administration in India" he delivered in November 1957 under its auspices. There is wide public interest in this subject. The reasons for this are easy to understand. Every inch of soil in India forms part of a "District" and the District Collector or Deputy Commissioner "is in the eyes of most of its inhabitants the Government". The activities of the district administration cover a wide range and touch the lives of millions of people at many points. Its efficiency and integrity are therefore of vital importance.

Shri Khera gives a vivid account of the functions of the district administration and of the manner in which it is carried on from day to day. He sets out the nature of the larger problems facing that administration and, from his long experience, suggests ways in which these should be approached.

The Community Development movement has introduced a radical change in the fundamental aims of the district administration. The movement seeks to build up social cohesion and unity in rural life at all levels, from the village upwards, by assisting the people through their own self-governing panchayats and co-operatives, to work for the betterment of their conditions and improvement of the quality of their life. The district administration is being remodelled in all States to enable it to carry out these responsibilities. In the new order of things, district officers will have an even more vital role to play than in the past. For this, they should of course possess the qualities of integrity and efficiency to which I have referred. But

more than this is needed. They should live with the people for the larger part of the year, obtain a sympathetic knowledge and understanding of their problems and win their confidence. Without this, they will lose their effectiveness. Shri Khera refers to the complaint, which also appears in special reports in some States, that district officers of all grades tend to have less contact with rural life than before. I hope that strong steps will be taken to stop the evil.

I have every confidence that Shri Khera's lectures will be widely read and appreciated.

V.T. KRISHNAMACHARI

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION—THE FRAMEWORK

WHAT is district administration? One has the mental picture of a typical district of India, with a district officer running the district with the assistance of a staff of magistrates and others, together with the police under a superintendent of police, and containing as the main elements of administration the maintenance of law and order, the administration of justice, the assessment and collection of land revenue and other taxes based upon the land, and the maintenance of the land records. In actual fact, district administration includes a good deal more than this. It includes all the agencies of Government established in the district, and all the bodies corporate such as district board, municipal boards and panchayats. I would define district administration, although in a rather clumsy way, as the total function of Government in the district; and would annotate it by saying that the form and contents of the district administration constitute a convenient method of performing the functions of Government in a district. It is important to bear in mind that any administrative organisation, such as the district administration, as we know it in this country is in the last analysis a convenient form and method of carrying out the essential purposes for which a government is responsible; there is nothing sacrosanct in an administrative pattern as such.

The particular form of district administration with which we are familiar in this country is somewhat unique. It certainly did not repeat or copy any pattern which prevailed in Great Britain, even though it was introduced in India and continued here during the British regime. I think that the district as such in India appears to be derived from something that arose out of the chaos and turbulence of the French revolution. To begin with, it seems to have been not unlike the prefecture in France. The prefect there

corresponded somewhat to the district officer in India. It was, I think, when Lord Cornwallis was here that the district as a unit came to be established as a formal administrative unit. The idea seems to have been to bring within the purview of one responsible official the sum total of State authority, State activity, and governmental responsibility; and at the same time to provide for the inhabitants of the area an immediate point of reference, a point readily accessible, not too specialised, and able to attend to as large a range as possible of problems that might arise. I think that this is an important aspect of district administration. It is of great advantage to the people in an area to have a local unit of Government which provides a reference point, where governmental authority can be focussed, where the people can make their complaints, petition for the remedy of wrongs, seek assistance, pay their taxes, and where in times of crisis or calamity all the resources of government can be brought to bear to meet the situation. I would like to say at once that a good district officer will not hesitate to take into his own hands the total governmental authority, should a situation arise that may require it. But to revert to history again, after the events of 1857, when the British Crown took over the sovereign power from the East India Company (commonly known as John Company), the Collector of the Company days became a servant of the Crown; he entered into an agreement, or covenant, with the Secretary of State for India. As a servant of the East India Company, the Collector carried on a good deal of trading on his own account. After he became a government official, he became part of the governmental hierarchy, and as such no longer enjoyed the privilege of private trade; and as a covenanted officer he became answerable as a public servant.

In the Indian States—as you know, there were literally hundreds of Indian States before Independence, owing allegiance to the British Crown on a line distinct from that which applied to the so-called “British India” in those States—the district pattern, and indeed the pattern of Government was somewhat different from the district pattern as we

know it now. But with the integration of the princely States with the rest of the country following Independence, the units of local administration have tended to be formed or grouped into districts, and districts of much the same sort, size, and pattern as the districts which existed in the former British India. Some of the princely States were very small, and in many cases several of these were put together to form one district, or were absorbed into existing districts, according to their geographical position. I remember that in central India and Bundelkhand there were quite a large number of petty States, often forming small islands within a district; when touring the district one was never quite sure whether you were in a bit of a State or in your own district. Now all that has changed. Today we have clear-cut and compact districts, and the whole country is covered by these districts, except perhaps in a few special areas.

That roughly is the history of the district in India. A district has proved a good unit of administration. It has proved a practical unit. It has stood the test of time. I believe that most people who have made a serious study of local administration in India have come to much the same conclusion, namely, that the district is a sound and viable unit of administration.

There are several types of districts. By far the largest number are of the type one would call rural districts. Much of what I will have to say about district administration will therefore be in the context of the rural district. The average district in India has been, and continues to be, on the whole a rural district. This is not surprising when one considers the percentage of the rural population in the country, and the importance of agriculture. Then there are districts where the local administration has to concentrate more on urban areas, and on urban problems. Delhi is a good example of this. There is the district of Delhi with its district officer, the Deputy Commissioner. Although his jurisdiction covers many villages, most of his work and most of the problems with which he and his staff have to deal arise in the urban area. Thirdly, there are districts which

I would describe as industrial districts, areas which are heavily industrialised. This is characteristic of some part of Bihar and West Bengal. In such districts there is a comparatively high degree of industrialisation, and the district administration has to deal with problems which do not occur so frequently in the rural districts. Then you have districts which are rather backward, where the local people have not had the same opportunities or advantages, as the more developed areas. Finally, there are the hill districts, where the people and the pattern of living, and also the pattern of local administration are different from the districts in the plains. Of course, there are a number of districts which are a mixture of these different types.

A word may be said here about jurisdiction. The different agencies of administration in the district may not have their jurisdiction co-terminus with the district itself. For instance, the district judge may be the district judge of two or even three districts. There may be two or three executive engineers of the irrigation department, each looking after a different canal system running through several districts. But in the main, the tendency is for the different agencies in the districts to have the same area covered by their jurisdiction, namely, the district itself.

II

Having indicated the rather variegated nature of the district and its administration, I would like to refer to the purpose of the organisation and of the methods in relation to the administration of the district.

What is the purpose of district administration? The purpose appears to be at the same time complex, but also perfectly coherent and capable of fairly precise definition. To my mind, the purpose appears to be, firstly, to maintain the district in a state of law and order, in a state of peace. That is above all things. Secondly, the district administration exists to ensure that justice may be done and that the rule of law shall prevail. This is very different from merely

keeping the peace, as will appear when I come to speak on law and order. Thirdly, the district administration is responsible for the orderly assessment and collection of quite a number of taxes including land revenue, irrigation rates, agricultural income-tax, and various others. Fourthly, it is responsible for ensuring that the land, which is the major resource of the people, is properly administered. It must see that rights in land are held and enjoyed and passed from one party to another within the jurisdiction of the law, and in an orderly way. It is part of this function to ensure the proper maintenance of the land records. Fifthly, the district administration may be called upon to exercise various regulatory and control functions of Government. There may be rationing of food, or regulation of movements of commodities, or purchasing of agricultural produce; and the district administration is responsible within the district for administering these controls and regulations. Sixthly, the district administration is responsible for taking immediate action in case of calamity, disaster and the like. Disasters will come, and they can come at any time anywhere. You can have a flood or a drought; there may be an earthquake, or a serious fire or an epidemic. All these things do happen, though not necessarily all the time and everywhere. It is this kind of crisis that has produced some of the main challenges to the district administration—it is a test of good district administration as to how quickly, how well and effectively the whole district administration comprising all its various ramifications, can be organised and harnessed to the aid of the people. Lastly, the district administration is responsible for what may be called rather loosely the developmental activities or programmes, which are intended for the positive progress and welfare of the people of the district.

That, then, is a fairly compendious statement of the purpose, or rather purposes, of district administration. It is in terms of these purposes that the district administration as a convenient form of organisation and method, has its justification and its test. These purposes are so diverse, or various and also so continuous, that no single

body can really do it. You cannot have a tight pyramid, a rigid organisational hierarchy. I know some people who think otherwise; some district officers even try to achieve it; but it does not work. On the other hand, you cannot have a plethora of different agencies for doing all these different things without considering and meeting the need for co-ordination and co-operation. For this purpose, the district officer occupies the pivotal position. Whatever he may be called—Deputy Commissioner, or Collector, or District Magistrate, or district officer—he is the one who occupies that position. This was true, certainly, under the British regime; I think it is at least equally, if not more, true now. As a Collector he is the authority responsible for the issue of writs and processes for the collection of revenues of all kinds; as district magistrate the responsibility vests in him for the maintenance of law and order in the district, and as district officer he carries, in the last resort, the executive authority of government. I think that this pivotal position of the district officer, and its recognition as such, is essential, so long as we have this particular pattern of local administration. I have said that the district administration is a convenient form of organisation and method, and that there is nothing sacrosanct about its form and content; at the same time, I think that too much experimentation should be avoided, and that the district administration more or less as it exists at present, should continue as the pattern of local administration in the districts for some time to come. The future will undoubtedly see new patterns, new forms and new methods tried out in district administration; and it is to my mind right that this should be so, particularly where the association of the people with the administration is concerned; but quite frankly I think that the pivotal position of the district officer will be necessary for quite some time.

III

What are the main components of the district administration? Some of them are of elementary importance;

but I mention them here so as to present as complete a picture as possible. And here I would like to stress again that the district administration is an organic whole, and not just a number of bits and pieces assembled together.

Firstly, then, there is the law and order component of the administration. This includes the magistrates: the district magistrate, the sub-divisional magistrates, the assistant magistrates of the first, second and third class, the honorary magistrates who may sit as a bench or as individuals, the other judicial officers, and finally the village panchayats which exercise judicial functions. That is the magisterial line. Then there is the police. The police in the district is commanded by a superintendent of police. The superintendent is in direct command of the police force; but the head of the police is the district magistrate. To assist the superintendent of police there are usually one or more deputy superintendents, circle inspectors, sub-inspectors and so on down to the constable and the village *chowkidar*. Then there is the judiciary. The judiciary derives its functions and power in direct line from the High Court, the district judge being the district equivalent of the district magistrate. In judicial authority, however, the district judge is superior to the district magistrate. He hears appeals from the district magistrate's decisions. It is a significant function of the rule of law that although the district magistrate is responsible for the administration of the district, the district judge is his superior in judicial matters. The relationship of the judiciary and the magisterial system in the districts is somewhat peculiar to our country. You have the district judge, the sub-judges, the munsiffs, and civil suits and civil litigation go through the courts in that line, and through the line up to the High Court and the Supreme Court. Another line goes down from the district judge, through the magistrates, including the district magistrate, the sub-divisional magistrates and others. In at least one State, an effort has been made to separate the judiciary from the executive, by appointing judicial officers to try cases under the Indian Penal Code. But the whole concept and application of the principle of the separation

of the judiciary from the executive bristles with difficulties.

2 The second main component of the district administration is the one which relates to land revenue, the land records and administration, the taxes, rates, excise and the like. Here you have the Collector, and the organisational structure contains the sub-divisional officer, the sub-collector, the *tahsildar*, the *kanungo* and the village *patwari*. In my time we were taught, and this was borne out by my experience of the districts, that the two king-pins of the district administration are the Collector and the *patwari*. The *patwari* has always occupied a very special and powerful position in the village. He is the keeper of the land records. Often he is almost the only literate person in the village. In the past, he was not only powerful, but he felt his power, and used it. So, the Collector down to the *patwari* constitutes one chain in the district administration, relating particularly to matters connected with the land, the land records, land revenue, the map, the registers of different rates and taxes, the accounts of revenues due and paid, and so on. The demand lists of other taxes such as excise duties, irrigation rates and so on are made over to the Collector for collection by the revenue staffs.

3 The third group of the main components of the district administration is the development agencies. There are quite a number of these. For instance, there is the irrigation department which looks after the canals, State tubewells, and other matters concerning the supply of water for irrigation. The irrigation department often has an executive engineer posted in the district. If the canal system in the district is a large one, there may be two executive engineers. Then there is the education department. The district inspector of schools looks after the primary and the secondary education in the district. The medical department has the district officer of health, and a civil surgeon who between them look after the health and medical aid in the district. Other departments, such as the department of agriculture, the department of transport, the

department of information, the department of co-operatives and so on have their local agencies in the district. I may mention here that the information officer in the district can perform a very useful function, particularly in regard to public relations. Public relations did not matter quite so much in the pre-Independence era. But the importance of public relations has been increasingly recognised in recent years.

You will notice that very often the officials in charge of the local agencies of different departments in the district are of very different status in regard to their service standing. It is a mistake, however, to stress these differences in status too much. It would certainly be a mistake for the district officer to regard the district agricultural officer or district inspector as a low form of life and not of adequate status for the district officer to take counsel with. No district officer who stands upon his dignity, or has a false sense of personal prestige, and for that matter no officer anywhere who does this sort of thing can go very far without making serious mistakes. One sometimes comes across an officer who takes the attitude "I can only hold a meeting or attend a meeting with somebody who is equivalent to me in status". That is a very foolish attitude. It is not only wrong, and it not only leads a particular officer into a state of isolation from the facts of life and of administration, it can also seriously damage the function of administration itself for which the officer is responsible. Whatever the formal personal status or standing of the local agent of a particular department or administrative activity may be, it is the duty of the district officer to deal with him and to treat him not as a subordinate or as a stranger, but as a valued colleague. It pays dividends in terms of true leadership and good administration in the district.

There is a fourth group of the main components of the district administration, namely, the local bodies. These include the district board, the municipalities and other forms of urban bodies such as town area committees, and panchayats. These bodies are constituted by law.

I would like to draw your special attention to the panchayats. The panchayat is something that goes very deep in our society and very far back in history. I think that it is going to play a large part in the pattern and content of the district administration. I have no hesitation in going so far as to say that the system of panchayats in our country provides the main opportunity and the main challenge and test of field administration, and that the success of the national effort towards the major objectives set out in our Constitution will depend upon what we make of this opportunity and how we meet the challenge and the test. There is an urge amongst the people, and it is by no means a political urge or something prompted from the talk, to bring these panchayats into active play, to share responsibility, function and power in the district, and to do these things in terms of law and order, in terms of the judicial administration of justice, in terms of the development and welfare activities. I commend this for your careful study and consideration.

The district boards are comparatively a new creation in India. They were amongst the first experiments in the passing of responsibility from the total governmental power held by the British in India to Indians; and they were explicitly intended to provide the opportunity as well as the training ground for the exercise of responsibility and power by Indians. Before Independence, these local boards went through several ups and downs. There was a time when the district magistrate was the head of the district board, and very often of the municipal committee as well. As such, the functions of these bodies were conducted almost as if they were departments under the charge of the district officer. In the earlier stages, the membership of the local bodies was either wholly or mostly by nomination. When the system of membership by election was introduced and extended, the first steps were taken towards a real transfer to the elected bodies of administrative function and authority. Even so, the district officer continued to be responsible to review their activities, and wherever he considered necessary, even to recommend the supersession of a local body. Such

supersessions were by no means uncommon; and I believe they are not uncommon even today. I must say that as a district officer I never felt very happy about having to recommend the supersession of a local body. If you invest a person, or a corporate body, or whether it be a committee or a board or a government itself with power and administrative responsibility and function, then to superimpose control of a supervision, which may or may not be very substantial or even effective but which nevertheless gives the impression that the body is not sufficiently fully trusted, then there appears to exist an invariable tendency for things to go wrong. I have often wondered whether it would not have been better to give these local bodies a narrower field of activity and responsibility than was sometimes given to them (for instance to the district boards) and even with narrower field to let them function without supervision. A comparison has often been made of the working of our local bodies with the working of the local councils in Great Britain; and it has sometimes been argued that the County and Borough Councils in Great Britain worked successfully because they were held on a tight line of control by the Ministry in London. That may be so; and perhaps in India that line of control was not tight enough. While the district officer had a direct line of approach upwards to the Government and downwards with the local boards, the local boards themselves did not have the same immediacy of approach to government. In the district I sometimes felt that had the local boards a greater and more direct approach upwards to government, they might have done better; because one of the things that tends to frustrate any agency in the responsible discharge of its function is to deprive it of its approach to the authorities above. I mention all this to provoke your thinking; what I have said is debatable, and I am certainly not sure in my own mind as to the position of local bodies in the districts.

5 As a fifth series of components of the district administration I would include non-official bodies, advisory committees and the like such as district development committees, project committees and the like. The pattern of these

committees varies from State to State. Committees of non-official citizens can, however, and do play an important part in the district administration. In this fifth component of district administration I would also include individual non-officials as well as groups which may vary from time to time. It is important in district administration to look for and to obtain the active support of people of high character, ability and devotion to the public good. This is not a mere platitude. In periods of grave crisis, such as the disturbances in 1947, it was found that those district officers who were successful in associating with the administration the right individuals and groups were able to meet the crisis more successfully than were the others who omitted to do so. I shall have more to say on the aspect of the people's participation in the district administration in my third lecture. At this point I merely wish to emphasise that it is essential for us to look for and bring out people (and very often the right persons have to be searched for as they are not necessarily the ones who are the most pushing) who are capable and effective in collaborating, and not merely in co-operating, in the task of district administration.

LAW AND ORDER

IN this second lecture, I propose to deal with law and order, which, as you are all aware, is one of the main responsibilities of the district administration.

I will take the liberty of making a few assumptions. Firstly, I am assuming some acquaintance on your part with the administrative structure concerned with law and order in the district, including the magistrates from the district magistrate down the police, the courts of law, and the relationships of these with one another and with the administrative structure at the State level. Secondly, I am assuming that you are acquainted, if it is only in a rather general way, with the main legal codes, particularly the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Evidence Act. These codes have stood the test of time, and each of them provides an excellent example of what a carefully drafted piece of legislation can be. Finally, I assume that most of you, and particularly of course the Administrative Service officers, are going to be concerned in one way or another with the district administration.

I will start by trying to formulate, in rather a tentative way, some principles which to my mind underlie the administration and the maintenance of law and order. These principles are related to the concept of law and order as we have grown accustomed to know it in India, and I hope and expect we shall continue to know it for quite some time to come. I attach more importance to these principles than to the rest of what I will have to say on the subject of law and order. The list I will submit to you is by no means a comprehensive list; but these principles are in my view amongst the most important. They are derived, and they appear to me to be naturally derived not merely from abstract theory but from the hard experience of history.

The first principle in law and order in district administration is the principle of absolute priority. It means quite simply that law and order claims, and rightly claims, absolute priority of attention by the district administration, above everything else. In actual practice, this question of absolute priority comes up before the district officer and his colleagues and staffs from time to time in a very real way. I have known officers to be confused as to whether something else than they are engaged in doing or supervising or giving their attention to is not too sacrosanct to yield to the need to break up the process altogether if necessary in order to attend to and maintain law and order. In one instance a sub-divisional magistrate who was acting as a presiding officer at an election was confronted with a situation where an imminent riot threatened around the polling station. He decided that the polling was more important than dealing with the riot. The result was that the riot took place, the polling booths were overturned and the whole election process was stopped by the riot. I may say that this particular instance happened many years before Independence. This example demonstrates a case, where failure to apply the principle of absolute priority resulted in a total disruption of the very process which was given priority over law and order. But even when the result does not follow immediately, where there has been an error in giving the necessary priority to law and order, you might as well give up the rest of the principles, as well as the effort of maintaining law and order. Some may disagree with this rather emphatic statement of the position, and quite possibly I may be wrong. But my own experience of district administration over the years, and in many different circumstances, compels me to the conclusion and to the statement of the first principle in law and order, namely, the principle of absolute priority.

The second principle is the principle of the safety of all. It seems to be a statement of the obvious, that law and order concerns the safety of everyone, and it is obviously quite right that this should be so. You might think that the principle is so obvious that there could be

no question ever and in any circumstances of there being anything to the contrary. Yet instances have been known where this principle has been challenged; where a particular citizen, or a particular class of citizens have been considered by some as being excluded from the operation and protection of this principle. The citizen of this country, whoever he may be, and in whatever circumstances he may be placed, is entitled as of right to his safety. The right to safety cannot be conditional or provisional. The only limitation I would admit would be the availability of the forces of law and order to maintain his safety. The right to safety and the right to protection is not something that the citizen must earn or do anything particular to deserve; this is his right that inheres in him as a citizen of the country and can neither be taken away nor even surrendered. So, to my mind almost as important as the first principle is this second principle, the principle of the safety of all.

3 The third principle is the principle of the rule of law. The law is supreme. This principle is clear and unqualified. The rule of law must either be absolute or you cannot have the rule of law at all; and any going away from the absolute supremacy of the rule of law inevitably tends to abolish the rule of law altogether. Any individual as well as any institution, be it a magistrate or a policeman or a board exercising authority or parliament itself, the assertion of any authority and the exercise of any authority by such individual or institution must demonstrably derive from the law of the land. In our country everything, every authority, derives from the Constitution. No one in the country has any authority whatsoever or can exercise any power whatsoever over anyone else except in accordance with the authority and power duly vested under the law. Incidentally it is a golden rule for magistrates and others having to deal with law and order to keep handy and readily available the codes of law under which they have to act in the discharge of their duties in general and in the maintenance of law and order in particular. It is a good thing for an official when he has to pass an order firstly to put it down in writing however briefly and secondly to state on the face

of the order itself the legal authority and the specific provision of law under which it is passed. The maintenance of the principle of the rule of law is the main safeguard of the individual against wrongful authority or authority wrongfully used or attempted. The rule of law in India derives from the tradition and history of constitutional law in Great Britain and stems from Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights and the maintenance of the supremacy of the courts and processes of law. Our Constitution specifically guards the citizen in his fundamental rights and specifically establishes the rule of law and the legal process as supreme under the Constitution itself. Unless the rule of law prevails and is consistently upheld law and order as we know and understand it would be not only difficult but in my view quite impossible to maintain over a period of time.

The fourth principle I would formulate is the principle of the use of force. The maintenance of law and order must have behind it the sanction of force. No one likes force or having to use it, and it is a mark of a good administration that force is rarely if ever used. But when you have to use force it is no good bowing your head in shame that you have used it or that you have had to use it. If I have to maintain law and order it is no use my being told that I must not use force or depend upon the use of force. The use of force to the extent necessary to maintain law and order is to my mind an important principle which should be recognised by anyone who has anything to do with the maintenance of law and order. It is not only the right but is in fact to my mind the inherent duty to the executive authority to whose charge the maintenance of law and order is committed, to use certainly the minimum, but equally certainly not less than the minimum force required to maintain law and order. I have put it rather boldly, and it needs a good deal of annotation; but the principle is, I think, valid.

The fifth principle is the supremacy of the civil authority. Even in the British period, the civil authority was maintained and sustained; but the military was always there in the

background, ready to be called upon or to take over. Under our Constitution and under the present pattern of administration, it is an operative principle in the maintenance of law and order that the civil authority is at all times in supreme command. It is important to recognise and to keep this principle clearly before you at all times.

The sixth principle relates to respect for authority. Mark the words : respect for authority. It does not mean only a fear of authority, but actual positive respect. And by authority is meant due authority under the law and not just anyone who sets himself up and attempts to exercise power. In any area where the essential respect for the authority responsible in the last resort for maintaining law and order is missing, or is diluted, then, in that measure will law and order not only be difficult to maintain but would, I submit, tend towards total breakdown. There are many examples of this both in this country and abroad. So long as respect for duly constituted authority prevails and is maintained, law and order will have a fair innings, whatever the political or other influences and conditions may be. There is a seemingly peculiar characteristic about respect for authority; respect can change very quickly. It can change from complete respect to complete contempt overnight, and equally quickly and completely the other way about. I have known district after district where it has happened. I must confess that at first it used to rather surprise me, the suddenness of it. But you can sense the change immediately. When things go wrong, or threaten seriously to go wrong in terms of law and order, it is well worth while for the district officer and his staffs to set out in a deliberate effort to enlist and obtain respect for authority. Of course, if you go about it the wrong way, you may get the opposite of the effect which is needed. Here is a point at which district administration is very much an art rather than a science.

The seventh principle is the principle of firmness in essentials. You must know, or sort out, the essentials in any given situation or set of circumstances. Having

established the essentials, it is necessary to state them and to let it be known what they are. Some things are essential by their very nature; and they include these principles which I am attempting to formulate. But there will be others, and they will vary from situation to situation. It is a test of good judgment, and so a test of ability in maintaining law and order, whether the persons dealing with and responsible for its maintenance are able to sort out the essentials from the non-essentials. In respect of the non-essentials there are large degrees and freedoms of action; in respect of the essentials you must ensure firmness in upholding them, or law and order will tend to break down even if the immediate situation appears to be resolved. Yet again and again it happens that firmness is directed at the wrong thing, often something quite unessential and even trivial, while the essential elements in a situation go by default or get overlooked, or there is failure to establish and maintain them. I will not attempt, in the time at my disposal, to give you examples, for it would mean going into a lengthy case history for each such instance, for as I have said, each situation provides its own array of essentials calling for firmness, and to that an example would need to be given along with a narrative of the circumstances of the situation at considerable length. But inquiry reports provide plenty of case histories and examples of both success and failure in applying this principle, and I commend their reading.

The eighth principle is that there must be clearly established limits of tolerance, and these limits should be widely known. When people know just how far they can go, they will go to that point; and if they know that that is the limit that will be tolerated, they will tend—this will not be invariable, but they will on the whole tend—to stop there. If they do not know, they will tend to go on, to probe and then again go on, until they reach a point where they know, or are reasonably clear, that they will be stopped. Therefore, in terms of law and order, it is a good thing to establish as clearly as possible the limits of tolerance; and any attempt to exceed those limits must be accepted as a challenge to the determination and ability of the authorities to maintain law

and order. Some might say that there should be a margin, and that this would make for flexibility and room for manoeuvre. That sort of thing may be useful in, say, a negotiation—and in fact it is a useful thing to have a margin in negotiations, whether in business or in politics. But law and order is not a negotiable commodity; and the principle of the margin does not work very well in the maintenance of law and order. There should be no margin, or so little as to amount to the same thing. And this is just where the skill in sorting out the essentials from the non-essentials demonstrates its effects, for good or bad. I submit that the quicker the responsible authority gets its mind clear as to what is and what is not going to be permitted, the better the prospects of maintaining law and order; and having made certain that there will be no change in the decision, and that everyone knows about it, then unless something really extraordinary happens, things tend to turn out all right, not of themselves of course, but so long as the decision is backed by a will and determination to maintain it.

I would like to draw your attention at this point to the phrase "law and order". You cannot have law, and uphold what is lawful, unless there is order; and order without law, and particularly the rule of law, is to my mind meaningless in the state of society in which we live. Examples of states of existence where there was order without the rule of law are provided by Hitler's Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Fascist Italy. Law and order, and the agencies entrusted with its maintenance, are committed to upholding the right and denying the wrong. It follows, therefore, that in dealing with a situation, it is essential to sort out and to distinguish what is right and what is wrong, and not to leave this to resolve itself in due course, as the situation develops. I have known case after case where a magistrate, threatened with an imminent riot, has been found sitting in an office, working hard and desperately trying to find out from previous records as to whether a particular procession should be allowed to go along a certain route or not, while outside the situation developed into an actual riot. My submission is that it is essential to sort out at an earlier

stage as to what should be allowed and what should not, and then stick to the decision. Then the decision itself becomes the right thing to uphold, and opposition to it the wrong thing which should be denied.

I will refer here briefly to two things which apply particularly in the maintenance of law and order, although of course they are of wider application in district administration and in fact to administration in general. The first is that there must be support for *bona fide* error. Law and order cannot be maintained unless those concerned in maintaining it are prepared to exercise their judgment and their will, and to take risks in doing so. The chance of error inheres in these things. I must make it clear that you cannot expect blind support for everything; but there must be in the mind of the magistrate and the police officer a sense that if an error is committed in good faith, he will not be penalised for it. It does not, and cannot, mean that error can be permitted always to remain uncorrected, or that a repetition of it should be tolerated. It is certainly the duty of the persons entrusted with maintaining law and order, in case an error does in fact happen, firstly to demonstrate that the error was in fact in good faith, that is, that it occurred despite the exercise of due care and attention, and secondly that steps have been or are being taken to correct or to minimise the consequences of the error, and particularly that due profit has been derived from the error in order to avoid a repetition of the same or a similar error in future. Provided these things are done, support is usually forthcoming.

The other point which needs stressing concerns the twin dangers of complacency and panic. Both these things are dangerous; and I have known both to happen, and sometimes happen in quick succession. Perhaps I need not say more about this at present.

I would like to testify that the principles I have attempted to set out have demonstrated this as valid throughout my own experience in the districts with which I have been concerned, either directly as a District Magistrate, or

as a Commissioner for a number of districts. I feel that one may reasonably conclude that these principles will continue to apply in our country and in the administration of the country within the Constitution. And finally, and this is a point I would like to make as forcibly as I can, these principles cannot be handed down from above; the recognition and an understanding of them must grow from within.

II

(I propose to divide the rest of this lecture into two parts, the first dealing with periods of normalcy and the second with periods of crisis.) Here I would like to repeat that I will proceed upon the assumptions which I set out at the beginning of my lecture. The maintenance of law and order is mainly in terms of the main law codes of the country, particularly the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Indian Penal Code, and the various Acts governing the police.

First, then, as to periods of normalcy. What things are important in relation to the maintenance of law and order? There are quite a few. Law and order is not something that will just happen, or that you can simply establish. It is something that has to be worked for, and worked for the hard way. If that were not so, it could quite easily be maintained and administered from a distant headquarters. One of the great merits of our system of district administration is that its structure is peculiarly well-equipped for the task, to do the things which make for the successful maintenance of law and order in periods of normalcy as well as in crisis. Now what are the things that matter?

(Firstly, there is a constant need to understand and to propagate the principles that underlie law and order itself. There are many ways of maintaining respect for law and order,) and again, please mark the word "respect". Respect is something positive and not negative like fear. (There is need for active attention on the part of the district officer, his assistants, the sub-divisional and other magistrates,

the police as well as for the other governmental agencies which are located in the district, to earn the respect of all for the maintenance of law and order? I use the word 'earn' because I do not wish to belittle the difficulty of the task. And here again, I would like to testify that our people, particularly in the rural areas, even more than in the cities and towns are able to size up the equality of the administration very quickly. It is remarkable to see how quick the common people are in sizing up the administration as a whole and how quick they are in sizing up any official who comes amongst them. I must also warn you that one can easily be misled and fall into the trap of being told things one likes to hear. One of the weaknesses of the old regime was that the district officer tended to hear things which pleased him, rather than the things which mattered. Whether it is a magistrate or other judicial officer sitting in his court, whether it is an official touring the district, or sitting in a committee, or visiting an institution, such as a school or a seed-store, or anything else, the people are watchful. They are more watchful than you might think. They might even seem to obliterate themselves from your notice; but they are watching keenly all the time. (The people tend to watch authority, to watch the agents of authority and the agents of government, and they are very quick to size them up. Therefore, it is necessary for all concerned to so conduct themselves not only in the handling of the affairs of the people but also in their own personal and private conduct (which in the district is rather more important than in a large city like Delhi), as a means of earning and establishing this respect for law and order and authority.)

(The second important thing in periods of normalcy is the liaison between the different governmental agencies in the district, and above all, with the people of the district.) I have referred briefly elsewhere to the rather new institution of the information officers. (The information services in the district can be very useful, and not merely in trying to defend the administration when it is under attack. It is a valuable instrument for use positively as a means of establishing and maintaining liaison amongst the people.)

The third essential in periods of normalcy is the need to watch for any challenge to or contempt of authority. Such a challenge can begin in a very small and often rather scattered way, and may even tend to pass unnoticed until the situation becomes serious. If there is a challenge to authority, it is better to meet it, because if you do not, there will be a tendency for the challenge to grow in various ways, until you are confronted with a challenge which cannot be ignored. A challenge to authority can arise in a number of ways. It can range all the way from petty mischief, and minor but open breaches of the law to a deliberate challenge to authority. The earlier stages are the easiest of all to deal with, just as it is easier to put out the small fire before it engulfs the building. It is here that staff relations are so important, as well as liaison with the people.

There is nothing easier than for an official to be misled as to whether an incident is really a challenge to authority or is a statement of real grievance. It is important to sort it out as quickly as possible and not to get confused. It happens only too frequently that a thing is interpreted as a challenge to authority when it is nothing of the sort at all. Merely regarding something as a challenge to authority does not make it a challenge; and every official must guard himself against any tendency or temptation on his part to do so. For instance, if a villager comes and stands before your car with a petition, or a number of villagers stop your car, drawing your attention by waving a lathi, you might feel irritated and you might say "Well, damn it! I am the district officer (or I am the superintendent of police, or anything else), and you dared to stop my car. This is a clear challenge to my authority." Well, you may take it as such; but you will have misinterpreted something as a challenge which was never meant to be such, and certainly was not such. This kind of thing happens, only too frequently. This is, of course, a trivial example; but there are a number of marginal cases where a mistake can be made, and, therefore, I would emphasize again the need to watch whether there is a real challenge and contempt for authority or not. A fair test is that it should be possible to demonstrate

in an objective way that there is a clear challenge to authority. Once this is established, then the sooner it is picked up and met, the better.

The fourth thing of importance is to know what has happened in various situations involving law and order in the past. Here, I would strongly advocate a continuous study of case histories of situations. It is a good thing to study these case histories, and hardly a week passes when a new case history does not become available for study. A careful and continuous study of situations elsewhere, and the handling of such situations involving law and order is extremely useful during periods of normalcy.

There are two other things which I may mention in passing, about periods of normalcy. These are (i) relations, liaison and communication between the district authorities and the military; and (ii) the system of internal security. I do not propose to go into these in detail here.

III

In a period of crisis, one thing to remember is that there will not be much time to make a thoroughgoing analysis of the situation, or to study the principles and theory, or the legal provisions. It is the time to apply these things. The main study of law and rules, and of the principles as well as of the situation, must be done during periods of normalcy. In a crisis the more important thing is firstly to make a rapid survey of the current situation. No two situations are ever alike. That is one lesson that experience teaches. There are similarities, and these provide important guide-line for decision and action. I should think that I had had to do with a fair number and a fair variety of situations involving law and order; I have never found it possible to say that any one is exactly like another. Each situation of crisis needs a quick diagnosis. It may or may not prove right and mistakes can be made, but a diagnosis is essential, and as with a good doctor a good district officer will tend to make a correct diagnosis.

In a crisis, it is a good thing for the district administration, that is to say the district officer, the superintendent of police, any other government officials concerned with the particular situation, as well as any others including non-officials whose association may be useful, to put their heads together in surveying the situation. Now, you might think that if there is a riot, threatening or happening in a village, perhaps in a remote part of the district, why bring all this complex machinery of administration into action? Of course, you do not do anything of the sort in every situation. It is really a matter of judgment. There are counterparts of the administrative machinery at every level, or there should be. Whether any particular trouble is confined to a small part of the district, or extends to the whole district, or over a number of districts, in every case it is useful to make a quick survey of the situation. Please note the word 'quick'. You may have to administer what amounts to first aid, while you survey the situation or even before it, at the first sign of trouble. But first aid is not enough. One of the mistakes which is frequently made is to stop further action once the first aid has been given. It frequently happens that when the first aid quiets down the situation, and allays the symptoms, the fact that nothing more is done leads to trouble breaking out in a more serious way.

I would like to draw from one of my later experiences in the maintenance of law and order in the districts. In 1947 when a good deal of trouble was already happening in the Punjab, a quick survey of the situation was undertaken, and this led to certain broad conclusions and decisions. One was that there should not be any large movement of the population, because where such movements had been taking place, it became extremely difficult to maintain law and order or to protect the community under attack. That protection would have to be rendered to the citizens wherever they lived. A system of field liaison was established at various levels. A quick study was made of the way in which the situation was developing in the Punjab, and this enabled a fair amount of preparatory action to be taken. The subsequent action in maintaining law and order was largely

based upon this study and preparation. I have no hesitation in saying that it was due largely to this that a calamity was averted. I would like to pay tribute to the district magistrates of the ten districts, and their staffs, the police staffs, the other governmental agencies, and particularly the non-official workers, who all rallied round the local administration at that time and each played his part effectively.

I have referred to preparatory action. This consists of a number of things including these, namely, establishing the force required, deployment of the available force, establishing lines of communications, and above all, setting out of the limits of tolerance.

Then, in a crisis you have to consider the use of force. How much force, what sort of force, when to deploy it and when not to deploy it? This is a matter of judgment upon each occasion; this exercise of judgment on the spot cannot be avoided. A show of force without the declared intention of using it if necessary, and to the extent necessary, is not a very good thing. In fact it can be quite dangerous. It is no use brandishing a show of force at someone, who knows or thinks that you are not going to use it. It has happened again and again, and more often than not serves to give provocation and increase disorder, rather than to allay it. Therefore, where there is no intention to use force, it is far better not to threaten to use it. Once a threat or a warning has been given, there should be no hesitation in acting upon it. The time to think is before the warning or the threat is given. I would repeat, therefore, that there should be no show of force unless you are prepared to use it. Then, the show of force or the demonstration of force should be stopped as quickly as possible. You might think that you can go round the countryside threatening to use force and even using it, to establish law and order. In fact I have been asked a question as to whether a district magistrate in a local crisis should have a police squad going round with him, or to carry a weapon. Personally, I have abstained from carrying any weapon myself. I do not think it does an individual much good to carry a weapon. On

the other hand, it is not much good for an individual officer to go into the middle of a howling mob, if the mob is well armed, thinking that the way of peace is going to rescue him. The chances are that the mob will get him. But individual protection apart, I would say that whenever in a law and order situation the judgment of the magistrate or the other officer on the spot tells him that force will be needed, then properly organised force should be there, and the people should be conscious or made conscious of the need to bring it into use. No self-respecting citizen likes, or will lightly tolerate, the brandishing of a weapon or a show of force at him. If I may remind you, it is the citizen's respect, and this includes his self-respect, that you require. That is what helps finally in maintaining law and order.

There is one point about the use of force which I mention with some hesitation. If I am in the middle of a crisis, and if the force available to me is stretched out rather thinly, and if I think that there is a challenge to authority, then my own tendency would be to get the challenge out into the open and to meet it. The reason is that you then meet the challenge on your own ground and in your own time, particularly when the available force is spread out thinly. But I repeat, I put this to you with some hesitation. It is certainly not a thing that I would advocate in the early years of a young officer's service in the district. In 1947 and 1948, we found it a good thing, in the particular circumstances of the time, to flush out any real challenge to authority out into the open and to meet it; and no harm was done.

Another thing drawn from experience is that in time of crisis it seems a good thing to enforce the minor or petty rules and regulations of law. I would call it petty enforcement. It makes people conscious of the existence of the force of law. It might seem an odd thing to say, but I think, and all my experience leads to the conclusion that on the whole, and even more particularly in times of trouble, the citizens like to feel that the forces of law and order are on top, and demonstrably so. The citizen likes to feel that

law is being enforced, and in fact it seems to give him a certain sense of security.

Good public relations are even more essential in times of crisis than in normal times, not merely or so much to defend or justify what the authorities have done or are doing, but to inform the people of the facts and of the essentials of the situation, and particularly to enlist respect and support for law and order.

A common error in crisis relates to the actual use of force. A frequent accusation made is that too much force was used. But when a situation gets out of hand, the accusation is equally readily made that the situation went out of control because the authorities did not act sufficiently quickly or strongly. It is a matter of judgment in each case. As I have said, no two situations are alike. You cannot make a rule saying that a particular situation will require a particular amount of force, and as I have also said, I may repeat that the judgment as to whether force should be used, how much force and for how long, is a judgment which must be exercised on the spot and the exercise of which cannot be avoided.

It is a mistake to bring too much authority or force to bear upon a situation. It is the minimum necessary force that ought to be brought to bear upon a situation. I have been asked a question "if the centralised authority is the right way to deal with the situation and the lowest competent authority should be left to deal with it, how does it require that the Commissioner and the district officer should take personal charge of law and order situation that arises". I would say that any such orders cannot possibly be intended to be carried out blindly. The principle of the use of the minimum force is a principle that prevails and should prevail. It is equally necessary to judge not only as to what is the lowest authority legally competent to deal with a situation but to judge as to what is the lowest authority adequately competent to deal with a particular situation. There may be a situation, a seemingly minor affair that a junior official, a *tahsildar* or a

junior magistrate is legally and technically competent to deal with. But it may have a significance beyond his actual competence, which demands the attention of the district magistrate or the superintendent of police. If everyone is doing his job rightly, with adequate internal communication including reporting and watching, it becomes easier for the right amount of authority to be brought to bear upon the situation.

I think there is scope for greater understanding and for wider application of this principle of the minimum authority. A senior officer attempting to attend to every situation that arises not only deprives the lower level authority of its sense of responsibility and ability to cope with such situations, it is also wasteful of the available resources; furthermore as likely as not a more serious situation may be left unattended because the officer who should be there is attending to something somewhere else which one of his junior colleagues or subordinates ought to be doing. It is necessary to exercise judgment in such matters. Once again, I would stress the fact that this exercise of judgment is inescapable. One does not need to use a sledge hammer to break a walnut. It is equally a mistake to bring too small a force or authority to bear upon an event.

There are one or two other points which may be mentioned here.

When a state of crisis is over, it is useful to go over it carefully. This is not so as to build up a defence, or to recriminate, for anything done or not done. Every situation and crisis involving law and order provides a lesson, which repays careful analysis and study. There is a common feeling amongst magistrates and others who have to deal with law and order that an inquiry into a series of events is a bad thing, and a reflection upon, or even a condemnation of, the way the particular crisis was handled. There seems to me no reason why this fear should prevail. This will be apparent when I come to my next point. A judicial inquiry should always be welcome, and particularly to

those responsible for dealing with law and order in general, and with the events under inquiry in particular. Judicial inquiries are intended to discover the truth, and in fact that is just what such inquiries have tended to do in India. So, instead of being afraid, I would strongly commend reading the reports of judicial inquiries into situations involving law and order.

The second point is that support for *bona fide* error must be assumed, and if need be demanded. It is no use anyone trying to cope with a situation, especially one involving law and order, unless he has a sense of being supported. Mistakes will be made; the more responsibility anyone undertakes (and the responsibility for law and order can be heavy indeed) the more a mistake may cost. But it does no good to the maintenance of law and order for those responsible to maintain it to go in fear of mistakes. I would like to put it this way. Assuming always that I am honest and also reasonably attentive and devoted to the job, if I have done what is right, and no mistake has been committed, I do not require anybody's support. The time I need support is the very time when I make a mistake; it is exactly then that I need to be sustained and supported. Here again, I would like to testify that this is just what has in fact tended to happen in the past.

One must assume, and be confident in the assumption, that one will be sustained in error made in good faith. Otherwise there is, almost inevitably, a loss of initiative, and soon a loss of the sense of responsibility; and the tendency sets in to do nothing and to take no risks. And you cannot administer and maintain law and order without taking large risks.

Of course, there can be little justification for a repetition of an error. The lesson must be learnt, and similar error demonstrably avoided, if support from above and from the people is to continue.

I feel I should say a word of caution against a tendency for each one to look for support from above, and at the same time to neglect giving support to those below. The

small official, the constable for instance, needs support, and the sense of support, as much as anyone higher up. There is no level of administration to which this thing is peculiar.

Then, I think, it is rather a good thing for authority, and those exercising it, to be somewhat impersonal. Personal leadership and the personal factor are excellent things in dealing with a crisis; but a state of crisis is the exception, and in the long periods of normalcy particularly for the agencies of government concerned with law and order should remain rather impersonal. After all, it is not a personal authority that any official exercises, but the authority vested in him by his office.

I have dealt with the subject of law and order in rather a discursive way. My intention has been not so much to attempt a definitive text upon the subject, —that would be beyond this lecture—as to bring out some of the things which I think are of special importance and concern to those responsible for law and order, and indeed to all of us. The principles which I have attempted to formulate, and which my own experience leads me to believe underlie law and order, are offered in the hope that it will provoke thinking and discussion.

Before concluding, I would like to enumerate some virtues worth striving for, and some vices that need watching against. The virtues include: courage and confidence, calmness, carefulness and consideration. The vices are complacency, cowardice, callousness and contempt. The alliteration is accidental.

And finally, a word from something that Gandhiji said in the middle of the 1947 troubles. He said that the agencies for the maintenance of law and order must abide by the principles upon which law and order is based; and to the extent that any agency, or authority, however powerful it may seem at the time, makes or compels a departure from the basic principles, to that extent it will end up by endangering its own existence.

There is a great deal in this.

REVENUE, DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL

IN this third lecture, I propose to deal briefly with one or two aspects of revenue administration, land reforms and development, and will then go on to some aspects of district administration in general which appear to me to merit some thought and attention.

Regarding land revenue, for that matter all government revenues of every kind, I wish to draw your attention to the fact that there can be only one standard of collection, namely, collection in full. So far as the district administration is concerned, this standard seems pretty obvious; but I think that it will be worth restating and keeping in view throughout that one of the main principles of revenue administration is that revenue is by definition intended to be collected, and ought to be collected. There are, of course, cases where it cannot or should not be collected; but these cases are very limited, for instance in cases of calamity, which may cause distress locally or be widespread. Sometimes it happens that after the crop of a village is harvested and is stored on the threshing floor, fire breaks out and destroys the crop. In such a case you have to be very quick in giving full relief on any outstanding amounts of revenue; and also, in addition, come to the aid of the villagers with money and materials firstly to relieve their immediate distress, and secondly to enable them to get on with the next crop. The procedures and methods for this kind of thing are well established and understood. I would like to emphasize that the different kinds of circumstances in which reliefs in revenue have to be given should be clearly defined and delimited. Apart from such cases there must be a clear understanding, and application of the principle of full collection of the revenues as assessed and duly communicated. No one likes to pay dues; and it must be understood that revenues cannot be collected

on a voluntary basis alone. Of course, the greatest part of government dues are paid or deposited readily and willingly; but the sanction of compulsion is always there in the background. Any reluctance to pay the revenues has to be met by effective demand and the degree of compulsion which may be necessary. Once this principle is allowed to slip or slide, even in a small way anywhere, there is no end to it; and I think I am right in saying that this principle continues to be valid, and I hope and expect that it will continue to be so. Therefore, our young I.A.S. officers when they go to the districts will be right in acting on this principle, that revenue committed to their charge has to be collected. That, to my mind, is amongst the main administrative principles which apply to land revenue as well as to other taxes and duties.

There are two or three other principles which are somewhat important. One is the principle of fair assessment. Whether it is land revenue, irrigation dues, agricultural income tax, or any other taxes and duties which are levied under the law, an essential preliminary to the collection of the revenue is the assessment of the amounts payable by each individual assessee. It is important that assessment should be fair, and that there should be amongst the assessees a sense of fairness both in the process and in the quantum of the assessment. This sense of fairness is best achieved by the officials concerned being really fair, and by avoiding too many mistakes in making the assessment. Another principle is the principle of certainty. There should be a degree of certainty at every stage and at every point. People should know the basis of an assessment, the method of carrying out the assessment, the amount assessed, the place and the time when the revenue dues are to be paid or collected. You will find that in most cases there are rules and procedures prescribed to implement this principle, and it is the duty of the revenue administration to see that this principle is given effect to. Then there is a principle of speedy relief. I have referred to the need for speed in giving relief. It is important to keep in mind that the very circumstances which predicate relief

equally call for that relief to be given as quickly as possible. Whether it is flood or fire or a drought or a hailstorm, speed in assessing the situation and in providing the relief is essential. Relief delayed can, and does defeat its purpose.

I will now mention briefly land reforms and land policy. We have seen great changes in the land tenure in different parts of the country over the last 30 or 40 years. The days of large estates and of absentee landlords and for that matter of intermediaries between the State and the cultivators have gone, and I think gone for good. The essential principles which I think apply under our present system are, firstly, that the land shall go to its tiller and that he shall be in direct relationship with Government; secondly, and as a corollary, that there shall be no intermediary between the tiller and the State. Thirdly, I think that the principle of a ceiling on holdings has come to stay. What that ceiling should be, and how the ceilings shall be introduced, may be the subject of much debate, but the principle of the ceiling itself has come to stay.

I would now, again very briefly, draw your attention to the system of land records. We have had for a long time a remarkably accurate and indeed meticulous system of land records. This was closely linked with the revenue and tax policies of the old regime, and was so adapted as to make the assessment and collection of revenue under those policies practicable. But whatever may be thought of the purposes for which they were maintained, we have inherited from the old regime a meticulously maintained system of land records. This is a good thing, and it is sound in principle to say that land records should continue to be accurately maintained. Under the new order of things, these records are, and I think should, increasingly be under the charge of local panchayats all over the country. When I speak of the land, I mean of course by and large the village lands, including the cultivated and uncultivated areas, scrub jungles, and the common lands. I think there is a trend away from the old system to the newer concept of investing the total responsibility for the management of the

village lands in the local panchayats. This is a good thing. As an ardent advocate of the village panchayat, I am convinced that on the whole the records of the village lands and land records should be in the hands of the panchayat.

Finally, there is the aspect of co-operative farming. There is a great debate going on currently about it. Should co-operative farming be encouraged or should it be discouraged? Is the farmer to be encouraged to cultivate his land individually or should he be encouraged to pool his land? Should the pooled holdings carry their separate identities, or should the farmers have an undivided share in one large farm? I am a firm advocate of co-operative farming. I think a certain pooling of the land on a co-operative basis would certainly make a difference in the productivity per acre. The land problem, in terms of agricultural productivity in the country, is to my mind not so much a problem of bringing so much more land under cultivation, but rather of getting more out of each acre of land which is already being ploughed. In this aspect also, co-operative farming is a good thing.

II

The next group of functions with which the district administration is concerned may be grouped under the term "development". To those who may think that this business of development and attention to the welfare of the people is something rather new, and in fact a new load or new imposition upon the district administration, or something that was unknown in the past, I would commend for their reading a very good book written by Mr. G.N. Gupta. He was a Bengal civilian in the old days. Much of what he wrote about would come under the term development. But this is the significant thing, namely, that what he wrote about was something which is not merely incidental to or outside of district administration proper but something which is an integral part of good and sound administration. It demonstrates, and is an example of the principle that sound district administration necessarily contains a great

deal of activity for the welfare of the people of the district. This is not to say that there is nothing new in the development concepts and programmes as we now know them; far from it. But what I do wish to stress and illustrate with the example of Mr. Gupta's book is that there was a good deal of thinking and action in the old days, in terms of the people's welfare, limited and circumscribed as the scope for this was by the major political and administrative policies of the imperial power. The quality of thinking in Mr. Gupta's book was unusual but by no means exceptional.

Now, coming to the present day, in the district you have the community projects and the national extension services, all of which were unknown in the old days. You have also a great many specific programmes of development in the field. These problems and plans vary from district to district; but they are tending to spread, and already have a very large coverage. It is important for the district administration to ensure that these plans and programmes are built up from below. There is nothing easier than to sit in an office and to make a plan on paper and to decide rather theoretically what should be done. It is much more difficult to get people in a village or in a group of villages to sit together and to consider and debate and argue out as to what exactly they want, and what their priorities are. One village may need a new well for drinking water more urgently than other things, while an adjoining village may want new seed or an approach road or a culvert or something else. A great deal of heated debate can go on about priorities. The answers in different cases depend upon different local circumstances; and no amount of abstract planning or thinking or discussion at a remote headquarters can take its place. A villager is quick and sharp, sharper than people may think, and he is quick in judging the whole sets of departmental officials who visit him to give him so-called advice and say "now get together and use this kind of seed, make this kind of improvement, take this injection against an epidemic", and so on. But no amount of planning and visiting and advising can really succeed unless it is built up from below.

Then, experience shows that in the district the different programmes tend to vary in their effectiveness according as to whether they are sufficient and sufficiently precise, particularly as to whether they are precise enough to be measurable. Simply having a programme to introduce improved sugarcane seed will not be as effective as a limited but quantitative and measurable plan. If you say in this village we will have this total area and these particular holdings where we will put in improved seed during the next season, it tends to produce results rather better than simply to say that this particular village will have as much improved seed as possible. Of course, it is the harder way to plan in detail and to prepare in detail and precisely beforehand, knowing that the result of the effort will be equally precisely measurable against the targets set; but I would like to say that the experience shows that the hard way is the only way. There does not seem to be an easy way of doing things that are worth doing.

Thirdly, these district programmes appear to be effective rather in the measure that they are practicable and adequate. You may say that it is nice to make the whole district literate, and you can make a brave effort but you are not likely to succeed. The exercise of careful judgment in setting up a practical programme is the essence and test of sound planning. What is practical is related not merely to the resources available but to a whole lot of other things also, including particularly the local circumstances. I would like to testify here that I have found in the rural areas a great deal of liveliness, a great deal of alertness to the need for a planned development, and a great deal of interest and pride in getting things done with locally available resources. That is where the real springs of action lie, and that is where great scope exists for personal leadership of a kind which perhaps one does not normally think of.

I would like to tell you of the *shramdan* movement in Uttar Pradesh. The idea was simple, strikingly simple. The idea was that the people of the State as a whole, including everybody and excluding no one, should do some

physical work which was laid out according to the principles of being practical and of being measurable. I happened to be involved in it because at that time I was Development Commissioner for the State. There was one thing that struck me, and struck all those who experienced it. This was the sheer amount and quality of personal leadership available in the villages, personal leadership in the sense of constructive work, not necessarily in the sense of political ability or political leadership. The people who rallied others round to fulfil these programmes were people whom you would never have known unless you happened to see that work. These are the springs of action which lie in the district and which can be tapped for development and welfare.

One feature of development work in the districts which merits some attention is the need to pool the available resources and agencies. As a Development Commissioner in one State four or five years ago, I felt the need for greater co-ordination among different agencies, and for greater conservation of the resources available. Efforts have been made to achieve a co-ordinated and integrated effort so as to make the best use of the very limited resources available. One such method has been to establish a major development department in the State, containing within it the departments of agriculture, co-operatives, animal husbandry, community development, national extension services and so on. But even so at the district level there appears to be a quite unnecessary come-out-of-compartmentalism and there is a great deal of scope for the pooling and co-ordinated application of available resources.

III

I will now refer to some aspects of organisation and method in the districts. I may say at once that the same sound principles of administrative method which applied to public administration in general apply even more immediately and indeed with greater effect in the districts. The district administration provides in a quite special and

peculiar way the meeting point of the total governmental administration on the one hand and the citizen on the other.

You will find in a district jurisdictional patterns of several kinds. For instance there is the territorial jurisdiction of the district officer or district magistrate and Collector. Often there is a functional jurisdiction, for instance a particular function in a district may be performed by a governmental agency located somewhere else. You will find departments of government with lines of authority and communication running into and out of the district more or less independently of each other; other lines of authority and communication and service to the citizen may run through local territorial agencies, such as the district officer and Collector; in some cases they overlap and inter-mesh. They may look somewhat confusing; I am afraid sometimes they really can be very confusing to the ordinary citizen. It is partly due to the way which we have inherited from the previous regime in running public administration in this country. Nevertheless, through all the seemingly confusing complexity, there does run a pattern in the district, wherein the total district administration can exercise the necessary initiative and function, in picking up and co-ordinating the total public administration within the district. This becomes apparent particularly in periods of crisis; and then it is very often a measure of the success in meeting the crisis, as to how well this initiative is exercised and displayed.

At this point let me invite your attention to the sources of authority that sustain the district administration. Where does the district administration derive its authority from? The administration as such can have no authority unless that authority is vested in somewhere or other. The different governmental agencies derive their authority either by delegation from higher authorities or, and this is a point which should be borne in mind, by law directly. The district magistrate and the Collector derive their authority in a number of ways. Quite a lot of it is statutory authority, in the sense that it is vested by law directly and cannot be interfered with except under due and specific provision of law.

That is one thing which our young I.A.S. probationers who have been attending these lectures should keep in mind. When you are posted as a sub-divisional officer or as a district magistrate, the statutory authority which you exercise (under the Criminal Procedure Code or the Penal Code or under any other enactments) is the authority vested in you by the law. You must exercise that authority under that statute, and that authority cannot be added to or taken away from. It is right that decisions should, as in fact they usually are, be taken at a point where the statutory authority is vested, because the responsibility for the decision must be discharged as prescribed by the law of the land and in no other way. It is no good a magistrate saying "somebody has told me to use force" or "somebody has told me not to use force, or not to use more than so much force" or "I have been instructed to impose this sentence or to acquit" or anything like that.

Quite apart from the statutory authority vested in the agencies of district administration, the district officer or Collector as the pivotal point of administration has to deal with all executive authority, where he is either specifically or implicitly invested with governmental authority as such. It may be an authority delegated by government, in whom in turn it may be vested by law as the executive arm of the State; or it may be a distributed authority or a decentralised authority under the Constitution or by statute. This executive authority is, as it should be, by and large contained in writing. It is a good thing to remain conscious of the specific delegation whereby a particular power, or authority or function is vested and to be in a position to quote it. No one, whether it is an individual official, or a group, can start out with the assumption that they have a lot of authority because they happen to occupy any particular office or position. I would submit that the correct assumption to start from is that no one whatsoever has any more authority or power than the ordinary citizen, and if any one has to exercise any authority more than that, then that authority must be duly and clearly vested by or under the law. This in fact is fundamental to British common law, from which

the principle and the practice of the rule of law in our own country derives so much. No one can just say "I am the Collector, or I am the district magistrate, and I am therefore empowered or competent to do this". It is surprising how often, and painfully, this lesson has to be learnt. Purely as a practical point, I would suggest that when you are passing an order, say under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, you should have a copy of the code on your table and you should look at the sections under which you pass the order. That is a bit of advice which we were given when I was a probationer thirty years ago, and it was good advice. When you are framing a charge under the Indian Penal Code, look at the actual section and read it over as also the model charge-sheets given in the Code of Criminal Procedure, and check the wording of the charge as framed by you with the sections in these codes. It happens all too often that an order or judgment has to be upset on appeal because the charge has been wrongly framed or the law has been wrongly quoted. It happens also in disciplinary cases, where the whole procedure can get frustrated because the officer in dealing with the case did not look up the appropriate rules which govern such cases. Therefore, wherever judicial or executive authority is exercised, I would stress the need for reference to the existence of the particular authority in writing.

Of course, this by no means exhausts the real powers of the Collector or the district officer, and for that matter of any Government official or agency. To my mind, by far the most effective sources of power to serve the citizen and the community and to exercise influence in matters affecting the public weal (which after all is the principal reason for the existence of any governmental agency) lie outside the line of statutory authority. This may appear to contradict what I have said a little earlier; but I do not think that it does. To my mind, the real sources of authority are contained in the relationships between the agencies of Government, and citizens and citizen groups with whom those agencies have to deal. In a crisis very often the greatest sustenance and support comes not so much from

statutory authority, important as this is, but from ability to obtain the response of the people. If an official or an agency is known to be fair and absolutely straight in its dealings with the public, the people will tend to respond and to accept decisions even to the point of a particular decision being erroneous. I think that in district administration this constitutes the largest and the most important source of real influence and authority. Take an inspector of schools, who is trying to see that the educational programme is carried out as faithfully and successfully as possible. Suppose that he is confronted with a strike either by the students or by the teachers. No amount of referring to the manuals and codes, and no amount of running back and forth will help him. What will actually help is the relations between him and his office on the one hand and the teaching staff and the student body on the other and the respect which he has succeeded in earning by his fairness and devotion and his past record in dealing with the situation fairly and firmly. I should like to testify that my own experience in the districts leads to this conclusion, namely, that the most positive and proper source of influence and authority is derived directly from the people of the district themselves, from the direct relationships between the district administration and the people.

The next feature in organisation and method has to do with the distribution of authority, and the delegation and decentralisation of function and authority in the district.

The first thing to mark is a seemingly inevitable tendency towards over-centralisation at every level. Mark my words "at every level". There is a tendency and a temptation for me to say that those above me have not delegated enough to me and decentralised enough to me, but it is very difficult for me to open my eyes to the fact that I have not delegated below me. This centripetal urge is universal. This happens particularly with junior officers because they are very diffident in letting other people make mistakes. I have found that some of the junior officers

in the district, whether it is the Collector or a district inspector of a department, tended not to leave things to their juniors enough, and tried to do everything themselves. Often the explanation given was that they could not depend upon the subordinates to do things as well as they themselves could do. If I am sure that my subordinates cannot do things as well as I can do, then the logical answer will be that all my subordinates should go and I should do everything myself. There is another aspect of this centralisation. Some of the senior district officers say that many of the things which can be done by themselves or even by their subordinates have to be referred to government or heads of departments, and if things have to be referred up, they have to pass through the stage immediately below the one to which it has to be referred, as a final check. Some of the most senior field officers speak strongly to the effect that the officers of the secretariat with insufficient or no experience of district work increasingly tend to tell in detail how officials in the district should attend to various matters. A very senior district officer has told me that he is made to feel like a schoolchild, while at the same time he is saddled with full responsibility for the result of his action. The district officer tends to feel that his hands are tied down; he feels that the headquarters officers, while giving all kinds of directions and suggestions, remain non-committal as to responsibility. This tends to persuade the district officer to be non-committal himself, and averse to assuming responsibility. The net result of this is that the district official tends to play safe, and remains fairly safe. But there is one thing that is affected, and that is the public interest. As a Commissioner, time and again, I have had to fling a thing back at the district officer saying : "Go and do it. I do not know. Go on and make your mistakes". There continues to be a great deal of scope for decentralisation of functions to, and also within, the district administration.

It must be remembered, however, that decentralisation is not as simple as might appear. Delegation of function carries with it concomitants which are vital. There is a

tendency among people to consider that delegation means on the one hand the shifting of the entire responsibility from the shoulders of the delegating authority, and on the other, the liberty on the part of the authority to whom it is delegated to exercise that authority untrammelled by supervision or check or correction. That is not so. If authority is delegated, the principle of answerability must be asserted, and put into action. The officer who says: "This is being delegated to me, and I will do as I think right. I am not answerable to anybody and I am not prepared to report upon it", is quite wrong; there is no room for such freedom. But you do get that type of officer sometimes. Delegation implies the enabling of a lower authority to perform a function, the final responsibility for which continues to be laid upon the delegating authority. It connotes effective supervision, without undue interference over the actual exercise of the delegated authority. Delegation does not mean transference of the entire responsibility. There can only be delegation of function and authority, to perform particular tasks in particular situations and in particular ways. Otherwise it is not delegation. It is not an easy thing, and not a soft thing at all. But administration is not an easy thing or a soft featherbed. You have to do a thing in the right way, even if it is the hard way. There lies partly the art, more than the science of administration.

Apart from delegation, there is distribution and decentralisation of authority. You delegate authority to a subordinate who is answerable to and through you. But distribution of authority is different. Here authority is distributed to mutually independent agencies, and very often distributed to agencies which are answerable to a party quite other than the authority which does the distribution.

I will refer now to co-ordination in the district administration. Co-ordination in the district administration is a thing which the Collector is fully in a position to do. A question has been passed to me which reads : "The district

officer has too much to do. His various functions should be allotted to others, and he should be left merely to co-ordinate". My answer is that if you have a body doing nothing but co-ordination, it will be left with nothing but co-ordination and would make it meaningless. I think co-ordination must come from a point, by an authority which is answerable for the co-ordinated function. I may be wrong; but I am drawing from my own experience. In a district, the task of co-ordination (and co-ordination means above all other things, the pooling of resources, avoidance of overlapping of effort, and therefore, avoidance of wastage of resources, the fitting in and dovetailing of various activities, so that the direction is similar and not at cross purposes) is difficult. The district administration as such has been in the past, and I think stands today, in need of very positive co-ordination of the activities of the various agencies of administration, and I would submit that the point at which that co-ordination can be achieved is by and through the Collector of the district, not necessarily, of course, the Collector acting in his individual capacity.

The methods of co-ordination are contained within formal and informal communication, the exchange of information, exchange of ideas, and consultation. There is a great deal of informal communication beyond and outside formal communication and consultation. Of course, this does not do away with clear delimitation of authority and function. It also definitely includes the possibility of disagreement. I think any effort at co-ordination which tends to exclude disagreement, cannot be sufficiently or adequately performed. During the war, I remember, in one department we had a rough and ready rule, in a system where things had to be agreed between various authorities, if too many things were concurred in too readily, there was something wrong. Either one of the parties agreeing was subordinating its judgment, or was redundant, or indeed there was something worse. The act of co-ordination and the functioning of co-ordination must not attempt to exclude honest disagreement. Co-ordination does imply the suitable play of disagreement, dispute, and debate; and the

resolution of this area of disagreement is one of the functions of sound co-ordination.

IV

A very important aspect of district administration is the people's participation. One of the main problems that remains unresolved is the positive association of the people with the agencies of district administration. The cause of this is mainly historical. As a whole, the public service, that is people like myself, and particularly of my age group, remained screened under the old regime from the play of public opinion and public activity. In the revolutionary change from the imperial autocracy of a foreign power to an independent democracy, many of us have by and large found it rather difficult to find our footing. I do not say that it is anybody's fault. That is one side of it. The other side of it is that the political party which is in office today was equally effectively screened, under the old regime, from the administration and from administrative procedure and from administrative method, and the application of administrative principles. I do not think this handicap should be belittled. It was a two-way screening. Personally, I think we have all done pretty well. Some people in fact express surprise that we should have got over this handicap so smoothly, so seemingly easily, and so effectively. It is important to remember that public administration is a highly technical matter and only gradually, and with both sides gaining experience could this change have been effected so well; and I would like to see any other country where people have done so much equally well. It is a tribute to the attitude and the approach of the political party in office today—and I am no advocate of any political party, let me tell you—that ten years after Independence, on the whole the disadvantages and the handicaps which existed due very largely to this heavy screening between the administration and the play of political forces have been effectively got over.

Now, that is a change which is fairly obvious today; but it was not so obvious fifteen or twenty years ago in this

country. It is obvious now that it is essential to have good administration and good government, that there should be considerable inter-penetration between the political party and those representing authority on the one hand and administrative function and power on the other. Unless this is achieved over practically the whole range of administration, extreme difficulties tend to arise, particularly in moments of crisis. I believe in the United States a large number of public servants are elected, and elected for short terms. They even include judges and others administering law and order. That is something which sometimes shocks those of us who have a different system of public administration. We cannot conceive of a public servant being elected to an office. It is something which is very foreign to us. I mention this to show that diversity can exist and that we should avoid any rigid attitude about the exclusiveness of the administrative services and the administrative staffs from the play of political events.

The main thing I may mention in this connection is with regard to advisory bodies and particularly the district advisory committee. Four years ago, there was a general feeling, particularly amongst officers—and the view was practically unanimous—that a district advisory committee, giving advice and assistance over the whole range of district administration would not be conducive to orderly administration. The feeling was that the district advisory committee was bound to interfere in the day-to-day administration of the district, that the committee members not being accountable for the main decisions taken, would come mainly, if not only, with personal requests and demands, and not with matters which might be of general interest. It was also feared that the rival parties and groups would inevitably try and influence the district officer and his staff, both as a whole and individually, and that some officers also would inevitably try to please various non-officials either through fear of their own safety, or the desire of advancing their own careers. Hence the morale of the district administration staff, and therefore, the quality of the district administration were bound to suffer. On the

other hand, there is quite a firm view widely prevalent now that it is only desirable to have non-official support, assistance and advice rendered by formally constituted advisory bodies. The main reasons given are that it would help to ease the Collector's responsibility, and secondly that it would help him to function smoothly. I do not think for a moment that this is anything more than a superficial analysis of the situation. I think that there is much more to it. There is very large scope for the participation of the people of the district with the district administration. I do not think that the right thing to do would be to have such participation through an advisory committee, charged with advising on the whole range of district administration, including the discharge of statutory functions for which responsibility cannot be shared. On the other hand, I think that there are other modes of enlisting people's participation. One, which is very important, is the village panchayat. A second mode would be the setting up of, not necessarily one, but quite a number of advisory bodies, each charged with a specific area of responsibility, and charged with the responsibility to the extent that it will be held answerable for the rendering of the advice given; because it is no good saying that after all it is only an advice, and hence can be rejected. As to which one is better, quite frankly, I do not know the answer. The point is this. We are in a stage today where administration cannot really discharge its true function effectively without the active participation of the people. I think that is correct. We are also in a state where we have not had, in the past, sufficient experience of this participation. Ten years is not a very long time; and they have been by no means easy years. Therefore, to my mind, the problem is not whether the people should be associated—mark my word “associated” by which I do not mean assist or support or merely advise the administration—with the district administration, not merely for welfare activities, but for the whole district administration. The problem is to devise the modes, the methods, and the organisations necessary to render this participation effective. It is a challenging problem. I think that it must constitute

the largest challenge to the district administration, to its spirit and its total strength.

V

I have been asked to say something about the changes that are coming over district administration. During these lectures I have resisted the temptation of indulging in reminiscences and anecdotes because, quite frankly, I think that the factors which apply to the events which form the conjuncture of any such reminiscences would certainly not apply in the present context. However, since I have been asked, I may mention one or two things briefly. The one thing that comes to my mind is the factor of continuity, rather than of change. That is a thing which comes to me again and again. The district administration has changed a lot in a number of ways. Land tenures have changed a great deal. We have travelled a long way from the days of the *talukdari*. Developmental activities have grown out of all recognition—the accent on them, the application of resources to them, and the general activity altogether. But still, the basic continuity is to my mind almost as the most striking factor. I think there is less touring in the district now. I am sorry that this should be so. One senior officer after another studying present-day administration in the districts comes out with the same answer, that there should be more tours and campaigns. I think there are more conferences and meetings than we had ten years ago. You did not have to keep on writing reports and letters quite so much. You knew broadly what you were supposed to do and you tried to do it. There were not so many visits between the field and headquarters. The field got on with its own job and headquarters got on with its own. There was much less correspondence, and there was used a great deal more the resourcefulness of the people and local agencies. Life was a little harder in my younger days than it is now. In the first year when I was told to do crop experiments in Sitapur district, I had to see some crops cut on several occasions in March and April some twelve miles

away. I just got on my horse, and on one occasion my cycle, and went along, and that was all there was to it. But not long ago, when I was Commissioner in Lucknow, the district officers complained to me that their officers were very short of transport, and the judicial officer or the S.D.O. who had to go for a jail identification parade in the morning could not go because no staff car was available. Had I said that sort of thing to my district officer in the early days I would have got a kick exactly where it was needed. It was after all possible to go on a bike and do the job. Then political activity was much less. Of course, there were no Ministers and no visits by them. A district officer told me recently that really he did not know what to do, there were so many visits. I told him to make a list; and he listed ninety-six visits by Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and others from headquarters, in a calendar year. Exercise of authority was somewhat different; also the sources of information were somewhat different. There were your visitors from the district, large landlords and so on who told you what they thought would please you and not what they should have told you. Of course, there were practically no elections. There was far more case work. However, if I have anything to do with district administration in future, I shall certainly put my weight behind pressing junior officers to do case work. It gives one a discipline of mind, which somehow is being lost. Lastly, the picture of the district administration was in one essential manner different from what it is now. We have seen British members of the Services in many more positions of higher authority than Indian members, who were very few in my early days. In decisions that related to district administration, whether they were taken in the district or at the state headquarters by and large the Indian officials of all ranks and grades were mainly on the fringe of major decision and the play of major authority. One was conscious of it. One lived in that consciousness, either on the fringe or just outside the flow of major administrative decision. Today, it is entirely different. Indian officers are at the heart of decision. Well, these are some of my impressions.

VI

Before concluding, I may mention very briefly a few conclusions that could perhaps be drawn from what I have been saying during these lectures. My first broad conclusion is that the district administration is an organic whole. It is not a mere assemblage of its component parts, but is a unified organic administrative organisation. My second conclusion is that our system of district administration appears to be a reasonable unit of field administration which has stood its test in periods of normalcy and in periods of crisis. From that I derive the further conclusion that our district administration, as we know it, will continue as the main mode and the main pattern of field administration all over the country. Thirdly, I feel that the Collector as the pivot of the district administration, as the main authority or agency responsible for the co-ordination and orderly application of the resources of the various agencies in the district, will continue. A fourth conclusion is that the general principles of administrative theory, of administrative organisation and of administrative methods apply to district administration as much as indeed even more closely than they apply to all other fields of public administration, with the distinction further that in the district the results appear much more quickly. Yet another conclusion is that the district officer's powers today as they are exercised—I would repeat the phrase “as they are exercised”—appear to be far greater than ever before. I am not sure whether I am right in this, but that is the impression I have. From this follows the further conclusion that his responsibility is such that he should be more conscious of this responsibility than he was ever before, in the exercise of these greater powers. My sixth conclusion is that, judged by the way the district administration has been operating since the year of Independence, it looks to me as if the public services as such will continue for quite a long time to be the instruments and the sources for staffing the agencies for the implementing of State policy. There may be non-official bodies or non-official individuals taking on executive functions in the more direct lines of administration. Nevertheless, I think that for quite

a long time, the public services as we know them in this country will continue to provide in our system of district administration the main instruments for the implementation of State objectives and State programmes. Another conclusion is that, in the new direction set for the district administration in terms of the welfare State, I am not at all sure that these instruments of State policy, objectives and programme have played an adequate part or made a sufficient contribution, or been brought into effective enough operation. That is a self-criticism, and I think it is a reasonably justified self-criticism. The eighth and the last conclusion is that there is going to be a great deal of experimentation in regard to district administration. This experimentation has been going on in the last ten years and this is likely to continue for some time.

